

are probably correct, though the chief foodplants upon which I have found the larva, are blackthorn and oak (as at Monks Wood), lime, and in Yorkshire and the north, usually elm. However, around 1954, while beating in Skellingthorpe Woods near Lincoln, I beat two *sphinx* larvae from honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), a foodplant I have never seen mentioned for this species in any book.

I have beaten larvae of the Orange Moth (*Angerona prunaria* L.) in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Lincolnshire and at Monks Wood, but never on anything but honeysuckle. Yet, Allan (*op. cit.*) makes the ridiculous statement, which I am sure is wrong, that *prunaria* larvae have been found on almost every species of deciduous tree and shrub, in addition to Broom, Clematis and Mint.

The species I particularly wish to refer to in this Note are *Philereme transversata* (Dark Umber) and *P. vetulata* (Brown Scallop). For these, Allan (*op. cit.*) is less generous than usual in only listing one foodplant for both species — *Rhamnus catharticus* (Purging Buckthorn). Stokoe and South in their book on larvae list only *R. catharticus* against these two species, but at the end of the book also include *Rhamnus frangula* (Alder Buckthorn) for them.

*P. transversata* and *P. vetulata* occur very locally in a few places in Yorkshire, with *vetulata* the more local of the two and seemingly confined to three or four localities. I took both species in a small copse near Selby until this was felled in 1950 (and the site later ploughed) — I never found larvae there, but as far as I know only *R. frangula* grew at that locality. Over 50 years ago, *transversata* and *vetulata* were recorded from Askham Bog, but again as far as I am aware it is only *R. frangula* that grows there and no *R. catharticus*. — S.M. JACKSON, 22 Armoury Road, Selby, North Yorkshire. [It would be interesting to hear from any reader who knows of the finding of the larva on Alder Buckthorn of either *P. transversata* or *P. vetulata* — Editor].

AN UNUSUAL COLOUR VARIETY OF *CHRYSOLINA MENTHASTRI* (SUFFRIAN) (COL.: CHRYSOMELIDAE). — Whilst sweeping bank-side vegetation including *Mentha aquatica* beside the River Avon at Great Durnford near Salisbury, Wilts. (SU 131373) on August 18th 1972, I took an unusually-coloured *Chrysolina* of the same size and shape as *Chrysolina menthastri* (Suffrian), a species which occurs quite commonly in this locality. The head and thorax of the beetle were black, the entire base of the predominately green elytra — especially in the sutural area — was of a distinct coppery colouration, and the legs and first three antennal joints, although having a greenish reflection, were considerably darker than in typical *menthastri*. In addition, the punctures of the pronotum had coalesced in many places, so that it appeared transversely strigose on its disc and longitudinally strigose at its base.

I submitted the insect to Mr. A. A. Allen who kindly determined it as *C. menthastri* and not *C. graminis* (L.) as I

had suspected it to be from its elytral colouration. Mr. Allen (in litt.) stated that he had not previously seen a similarly coloured individual of this species.

It is perhaps worth drawing attention to the fact that Mohr in "Die Käfer Mitteleuropas" (1966, vol. 9: 164) considers *menthastri* as merely an entirely green large variety of *Chrysolina herbacea* Duftschmid, the latter insect being described as green, copper coloured, blue-violet, or black with a blue shine. — D. R. NASH, 266 Colchester Road, Lawford, Manningtree, Essex.

[Mr. Nash's specimen is certainly highly unusual for Britain; on the Continent the members of this genus tend to be very much more variable in colour. The insect under notice would appear further to be something of a sculptural abnormality, and presumably the two aspects are due to the same cause or are linked in some way.

It is worth noting that though Mohr (*l.c.*) gives the same length for *C. graminis* and *C. menthastri* (or *herbacea* v. *menthastri*), the British races differ in this respect, *graminis* being obviously the larger on average with the males more elongate. I find also a character additional to those given in the literature to separate these species, viz., that in *graminis* the hind tibiae are distinctly sinuate towards apex on their outer margin, where they bend slightly outwards, whereas in *menthastri* they are practically straight in the apical half or even curve a little inwards. — A.A.A.]

AN ALTERNATIVE LARVAL FOODPLANT OF THE WHITE LETTER HAIRSTREAK (*STRYMONIDIA w-ALBUM* KNOCH. — In early March 1978, a single *S. w-album* ovum was found on blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) while searching for *S. pruni* ova in Oxfordshire. This ovum was laid on a terminal twig about three metres above ground level, the bush being at the edge of an extensive blackthorn thicket.

The resulting larva fed on blackthorn blossoms thereafter and almost completely ignored the leaves which were also available. It duly pupated and produced a typical female some weeks later. Several days passed after I had noticed the empty ovum before the minute larva was located. In the first instar and for part of the second, the larva concealed itself within the blossoms when feeding. During this period, the only time I saw the larva was when it left the blossom buds to complete the first ecdysis. The larva spun a pad of silk on a nearby twig and remained there until the moult was completed. As the larva grew in size, the feeding method was changed. Only the head and first few segments were able to enter the blossoms, the larva resting on the twigs between feeding sessions. This pattern of feeding was similar to that used by some *w-album* larvae I had reared on wych elm in the past. These larvae also entered the blossoms immediately after hatching, transferring to the leaves when half grown.

This interesting observation may provide a clue for those who, like myself, have considered the fate of *w-album* now